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NATURE CONSERVATION NEWS

Beachwatch 2005

Frances Jannaway

Beachwatch, the flagship event of the Adopt-a-Beach project, is a coastal environmental initiative organised by the Marine Conservation Society (MCS) - the UK charity dedicated to the protection of the marine environment and its wildlife.

The Beachwatch litter survey and clean-up is a national event that has taken place on the third weekend of September every year since 1993. Thousands of volunteers from around the UK spend a few hours of the Beachwatch weekend helping to clean up our coastline, supporting MCS's campaign to reduce litter on our beaches and at sea.

Beachwatch is not just about cleaning beaches - it also involves carrying out a **LITTER SURVEY**. This means recording all the litter items found in a minimum 100-metre stretch of the beach. The data collected is analysed by MCS to enable them to get an idea of how much litter is on our beaches, what type of rubbish it is and, more importantly, where it is coming from.

Emsworth Beachwatch 2005 took place on the afternoons of 17th and 18th September when two stretches of coastline were surveyed.

On Saturday 17th, a group of nine volunteers (all local residents apart from one and he came from Winchester) cleaned and surveyed the (approx. 400 metres long) eastern foreshore between the Emsworth Sailing Club and the end of King Street. The total number of items recorded was 892, filling six black sacks with a total weight of 35 kilos.

Wooden relic - An interesting find from this part of the foreshore was a large wooden copper riveted panel, possibly part of a World War II torpedo boat or landing craft. This historic relic was not removed from its resting place and so has not been included in the Beachwatch figures.

The above surveying procedure was repeated on Sunday 18th, when the section of western foreshore from Emsworth Sailing Club up to the end of Beach Road was surveyed (approx. 800 metres long). The total number of items recorded was 521, filling one black sack plus a metal pipe and a concrete filled tyre with a total weight of 34 kilos.

Sewage on the Beach - Another major discovery was important for a totally different reason. We found a large amount of very different litter near the storm drain outlet on the beach near Kings Road which had clearly come from a sewer. The Environmental Health Department at Havant Borough Council were subsequently contacted and asked to do something about the problem. Their response was to try to pass the matter on to the Environment Agency. This problem has recurred recently and will continue to do so until it is dealt with properly. I heard recently from a reliable source that no unscreened rubbish should be discharged at any time.

MCS report - The data collected by MCS will be used to highlight the main sources of litter, target major polluters and urge action to reduce pollution at source. It focuses the attention on the collective responsibility to keep the seas and beaches clear of litter.

The final report of all the data collected from the 350 or so beaches around the UK will be available on the Adopt-a-Beach website www.adoptabeach.org.uk in the Spring.

I would like to thank all the volunteers who gave up their time to help with this important clean-up and recording operation. If you missed out on last year's event, why not come along this year on **16-17 September** and help with **Beachwatch 2006**.



Volunteers Mary Colbourne (L) and Pam Picknett (R) recording litter during Beachwatch 2005 on Emsworth Foreshore East

Global warming-it's on our doorsteps

Ray Cobbett, Chairman - Hampshire Friends of the Earth

Like other low-lying coastal communities Emsworth is in the front line of global warming. The lower parts of Emsworth are less than two metres above sea level. We are not going to be swept away shortly but the rising sea is as much a threat to our future as it is to millions of others across the world.

So how big a threat are we facing? Most experts agree that by the end of this century sea levels could have risen by up to a metre. It gets more complicated because south and eastern Britain is slowly sinking as the north and west rise.

At the root of all these changes is human activity, pumping millions of tons of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases like methane into the atmosphere. Burning coal oil and gas in power plants, vehicles, and factories contribute about 22 billion tons of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases into the earth's atmosphere each year. Aircraft burn prodigious quantities of fuel depositing the CO2 direct into the stratosphere, where it does the most damage. Animal agriculture, manure, natural gas, rice paddies, landfills, and other sources contribute about 250 million tons of methane each year. Due to the warming ice cover on both poles is rapidly shrinking, thus depriving the planet of the massive white reflectors which reflect the sun's heat back into space.

Not that all the effects of warmer weather will be unpleasant. Lower fuel bills, more exotic gardens and species and perhaps some half decent grapes for a Chateau Emsworth are among the pluses. But five million people are now at risk from flooding partly as a result of building in flood plains of rivers and coasts. Billions of pounds are needed for protection against floods that once happened once every 100 years but now happen every ten or twenty years.



Lumley Road Emsworth flooded at high tide 3 November 2005

Emsworth knows a bit about flooding having seen parts of the town under water in 1995 and 2000. The combination of prolonged heavy rainfall, gale force winds from the south, tidal surge and low barometric pressure were enough to flood Bridge Road, Bath Road, Bridgefoot Path, Victoria Road and South Street.

Over the last 150 years British estuaries have lost between a quarter to a half of their intertidal habitats. Thousands of acres of sand and mudflats, as well as salt marsh, are at risk from rising seas and violent storms. These include Chichester and Langstone Harbours and their internationally recognised sites for wildfowl and other species. Defending these areas raises serious questions in which the solutions may prove to be more damaging than the problem. Coasts are mobile and dynamic. The construction of defences on one part of the coast can have a disastrous impact along the coast. Even when expensive measures are taken to keep the sea at bay there's no guarantee they will work as has been seen at Selsey and Hayling Island

By now it's clear that we all have a vital part to play to at least mitigate the worst effects of global warming on our communities. Each one of us generates a carbon footprint directly related to our life styles. Factors that shape our individual family carbon footprints include, type of heating and boiler, cavity wall and loft insulation, use of low energy light bulbs, amount of energy purchased from renewable sources, number and type of cars and mileages. The average CO2 output per UK family is 10 tonnes, half that of the US but still enormously more than the majority of the world.

It may seem a long way from what cars we drive to rising sea levels, but there are very clear relationships between what we do and how our atmosphere changes. One of the most stunning images of the 20th century was a picture of planet Earth taken from the moon. The concept of spaceship earth was coined and it perfectly describes our environment. Just as we like to keep where we live clean, safe and pleasant so it must be with the only true home we have.

Town Mill Pond

John Mant

The Mill Pond Group, which has undertaken to befriend the Town Mill Pond, has resolved their public liability insurance problem and now have tools provided by HBC. They are ready to begin operations in the New Year so the floating litter we have suffered in the past few years should be greatly reduced.

Friends of Nore Barn Wood

Roy Ewing

Several small projects have recently come to fruition in the woods. Two information points have been installed to enhance the awareness of visitors.

Firstly, a Notice Board has been provided by the Liveability Fund (Emsworth Community Board). Constructed out of oak, this board is situated on the Wayfarers Walk and will be used to inform visitors of news and future plans for the woods.

In addition, an Interpretation Board has been funded by Chichester Harbour Conservancy. This colourful board provides a map of the woods and lists fine examples of the local flora and fauna.

To complete these improvements, two Kissing Gates have been installed by Havant Borough Council on Selangor Path. These replace the collapsed barrier on the route from Havant Road to the woods.



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